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ABSTRACT

The Ninth Grade Restructuring Program of the Detroit (Michigan) public schools was designed to restructure the ninth grade in ways that improve academic performance, develop positive attitudes toward learning, improve the school environment, reduce the dropout rate, and increase the graduation rate of students. Features of the program were instructional and direct noninstructional services, such as social services, counseling and psychological services, tutoring by student assistants with teacher supervision, and parent participation. This Executive Summary presents citywide findings from the second year study of the program. One of the chief findings is that the rate at which Grade 9 students discontinued their education declined in 1996-97 as it did in 1995-96. Among incoming Grade 9 students, transferring students decreased from 8.82% (1995) to 5.64% (1996) to 3.64% (1997), and students discontinuing their educations decreased from 18.28% (1995) to 11.7% (1996) to 5.14% (1997). A similar trend was found for students repeating courses, with declines across the 3 years for transfers and students discontinuing their education. Among newly promoted Grade 10 students, transfers decreased, but students discontinuing their education increased from 3.18% in 1996 to 3.98% in 1997. The Grade 10 discontinued rates actually increased in only two areas (B and F). The overall slight increase in the percent of Grade 10 students leaving school leads to the conclusion that the Grade 9 Restructuring Program should be continued in Grade 10 and beyond. (SLD)

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May, 1997

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## PROGRAM FACTS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Name of Program | : | 1996-97 Ninth Grade Restructuring Program - Citywide |
| Funding Year | : | 1996-97 |
| Purpose of Program | : | The purpose of the program is to restructure ninth grade in ways which improve academic performance; develop positive attitudes toward learning; improve the school environment to promote learning and self-respect, caring and respect for the individuality and rights of others; reduce the dropout rate and increase the graduation rate of students. |
| Features of Program | : | Instructional and direct non-instructional services, such as social worker, counseling and psychological services; tutorial methods with student assistants working under the supervision of a certified teacher; parents' involvement in instructional and non-instructional activities with their children. |
| Funding Source | : | 31a State funds and Title 1 |
| Funding Level | : | $20,575,328 - Title 1 and 31a Ninth Grade Restructuring Allocation |
| Ninth Grade Enrollment | : | 16,281 students during the 1996-97 school year |
| Number and Level of Participants | : | Citywide, 1994-95 Grade 9 Students (Before the Program) |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Ninth Grade incoming students during the school year | 12,585 (69%) |
| 2. Ninth Grade students repeating courses during the school year | 5,538 (31%) |
| Total | 18,123 (100%) |

Citywide, 1995-96 Grade 9 Students (First Year Program)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Ninth Grade incoming students during the school year | 12,167 (68%) |
| 2. Ninth Grade students repeating courses during the school year | 5,661 (32%) |
| Total | 17,828 (100%) |

Citywide, 1996-97 Grade 9 Students (Second Year Program)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Ninth Grade incoming students during the school year | 11,324 (70%) |
| 2. Ninth Grade students repeating courses during the school year | 4,957 (30%) |
| Total | 16,281 (100%) |

Citywide, 1995-96 Grade 10 Students (Not Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Tenth Grade incoming students during the school year | 7,728 (73%) |
| 2. Tenth Grade students repeating courses during the school year | 2,879 (27%) |
| Total | 10,607 (100%) |

Citywide, 1996-97 Grade 10 Students

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Tenth Grade incoming students during the school year (Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program) | 7,602 (74%) |
| 2. Tenth Grade students repeating courses during the school year (Not Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program) | 2,693 (26%) |
| Total | 10,295 (100%) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Number and Level of Schoos in Program | : | Area A: Cass Technical H.S., Chadsey H.S., Commerce H.S., Crockett H.S., Douglass Academy, Ferguson H.S., King H.S., Miller M.S., Murray-Wright H.S., Southwestern H.S. and Western H.S.<br><br>Area B: Cody H.S., Detroit City H.S., Herman/Rogers Academy, Mackenzie H.S. and Northwestern H.S.<br><br>Area C: Communication and Media Arts H.S., Cooley H.S., Ford H.S., Redford H.S., Renaissance H.S. and Northwestern H.S.<br><br>Area D: Beaubien M.S., Boykin H.S., Central H.S., Detroit H.S., Hampton M.S., Mumford H.S and Northern H.S.<br><br>Area E: Davis Aerospace Technical H.S., Kettering H.S., Osborn H.S. and Pershing H.S.<br><br>Area F: Denby H.S., Finney H.S., Southeastern H.S., Charles Vincent CEC, and Jackson M.S. |
| Staffing Pattern | : | Teachers, administrators and support staff from the regular school |
| Instructional Time | : | Regular hours - six hours per day |
| Equipment and Materials | : | Same equipment and materials used during the regular school year. |
| First Year Funded | : | 1995-96 |

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
# OF THE
# 1996-97 NINTH GRADE RESTRUCTURING PROGRAM

## Purpose and Features of the Program

The purpose of the program is to restructure ninth grade in ways which improve academic performance; develop positive attitudes toward learning; improve the school environment to promote learning and self-respect, caring and respect for the individuality and rights of others; reduce the number of students leaving school and increase the graduation rate of students.

Schools were to design and implement programs to improve the academic achievement of the at-risk students. Schools could use instructional and direct non-instructional services, such as social workers, counseling and psychological services; tutorial methods with student assistants working under the supervision of a certified teacher; and/or involve parents in instructional and non-instructional activities with their children.

## Methodology

The evaluation reviews both process and product data. A presentation of process findings begins on Page 2; product findings begins on Page 9.

**Process Evaluation** - The evaluation of the 1996-97 Ninth Grade Restructuring Program was designed to assess the success of the program as perceived by the principals, ninth grade administrators, teachers and students. Four surveys were developed containing statements related to the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program. The principals', the Ninth Grade administrators', the teachers' and the students' surveys contained both forced-choice and open-ended questions. The forced-choice questions were accompanied by a Likert-type scale upon which the responses were marked. The four surveys were administered by the Project Evaluator.

**Product Evaluation** - Data on grade point averages, attendance, credit hours, academic achievement and the educational status* of ninth grade students were collected for 1994-95 (Before the Program), 1995-96 (First Year with Program), and 1996-97 (Second Year with Program). Also, the same data were collected for the 1995-96 (Before the Program) and 1996-97 (After the Program) tenth grade students. Post data for grade point averages, attendance and credit hours were received from the district's AS400 information system. The educational status of students came from the district's AS400 information system. Data from the administration of the Metropolitan Achievement Tests (Reading and Mathematics) (MAT7, Form S, Level S1, Psychological Corporation, 1993 administered spring 1995, 1996 and 1997) came from the files of the Office of Research, Evaluation and Assessment. The evaluator of the Ninth Grade Restructuring was responsible for collecting and analyzing all product data.

*Students leaving school: a. Discontinued their education
b. Continued their education in night school or another school system

Separate reports were prepared for each Area followed by one consolidated report for all areas. Also, a report of programs suggested by the Ninth Grade Administrators as being successful was prepared.

## PRODUCT EVALUATION FINDINGS

Highlights of the educational status of the Product Evaluation are as follows:

a. Among incoming Grade 9 students, transferring students decreased from 8.82% (1995), to 5.64% (1996), to 3.64% (1997); students discontinuing their education decreased from 18.28% (1995), to 11.70% (1996), to 5.14% (1997).

b. Among Grade 9 students repeating courses, transferring students decreased from 15.06% (1995), to 11.20% (1996), to 6.48% (1997); students discontinued their education decreased from 42.79% (1995), to 34.72% (1996), to 16.44% (1997).

c. Among newly promoted Grade 10 students, transferring students decreased from 3.56% (1996) to 2.62% (1997); students discontinuing their education increased from 3.18% (1996) to 3.98% (1997).

d. Produce variables were measured for the ninth grade students for June, 1995 (Without the Program), and the ninth grade students for June, 1996 and June, 1997 (With the Program). The results are based on all schools having ninth grade students:

| | 6/1996 Compared to 6/95 | 6/1997 Compared to 6/95 |
|---|---|---|
| a. Grade Point Averages | - Remained the same | Remained the same |
| b. Student Daily Attendance | - Remained the same | Increased |
| c. Credit Hours Attempted | - Remained the same | Increased |
| d. Credit Hours Earned | - Remained the same | Increased |
| e. MAT Reading | - Increased | Remained the same |
| f. MAT Mathematics | - Increased | Increased |
| g. Educational Status* | - Decreased** | Decreased** |

Three out of seven variables showed improvement and four remained the same for 1995 vs. 1996. Five out of seven variables showed improvement and two remained the same for 1995 vs. 1997.

## I. NINTH GRADE DATA*

**A. 1. Grade Point Averages (1995)**
(Before the Program)

- Schools' grade point average ranged from 0.8 to 3.0
- Areas' grade point average ranged from 1.2 to 1.8
- District's grade point average is 1.5

**2. Grade Point Averages (1996)**
(First Year Program)

- Schools' grade point average (GPA) average ranged from 0.7 to 3.2
- Areas' grade point average ranged from 1.3 to 1.9
- District's grade point average is 1.5

**3. Grade Point Averages (1997)**
(Second Year Program)

- Schools' grade point average (GPA) average ranged from 0.8 to 2.0
- Areas' grade point average ranged from 1.3 to 1.9
- District's grade point average is 1.5

**B. 1. Student Daily Attendance (1995)**
(Before the Program)

- Schools' daily attendance average ranged from 68% to 96%
- Areas' daily attendance average ranged from 72% to 83%
- District's daily attendance average is 77%

**2. Student Daily Attendance (1996)**
(Second Year Program)

- Schools' daily attendance average ranged from 66% to 96%
- Areas' daily attendance average ranged from 71% to 84%
- District's daily attendance average is 77%

**3. Student Daily Attendance (1997)**
(Second Year Program)

- Schools' daily attendance average ranged from 68% to 97%
- Areas' daily attendance average ranged from 72% to 85%
- District's daily attendance average is 78%

*The 1995 data (Without the Program) compared to 1996 and 1997 data (With the Program).

3. Student Daily Attendance (1997)
(Second Year Program)

- Schools' daily attendance average ranged from 68% to 97%
- Areas' daily attendance average ranged from 72% to 85%
- District's daily attendance average is 78%

C. 1. Credit Hours Attempted and Earned (1995)
(Before the Program)

- Schools' average credit hours attempted ranged from 30.0 to 78.8
- Schools' average credit hours earned ranged from 1.6 to 74.1
- Areas' average of credit hours attempted ranged from 4.1 to 55.0
- Areas' average of credit hours earned ranged from 13.6 to 46.7
- District's average credit hours attempted is 48.5
- District's average credit hours earned is 32.8

2. Credit Hours Attempted and Earned (1996)
(First Year Program)

- Schools' average credit hours attempted ranged from 30.0 to 78.8
- Schools' average credit hours earned ranged from 13.6 to 77.0
- Areas' average credit hours attempted ranged from 42.4 to
- Areas' average credit hours earned ranged from 24.1 to 46.0
- District's average credit hours attempted is 48.5
- District's average credit hours earned is 32.8

3. Credit Hours Attempted and Earned (1997)
(Second Year Program)

- Schools' average credit hours attempted ranged from 21.3 to 77.8
- Schools' average credit hours earned ranged from 20.7 to 77.0
- Areas' average credit hours attempted ranged from 43.8 to 66.0
- Areas' average credit hours earned ranged from 39.1 to 46.7
- District's average credit hours attempted is 49.7
- District's average credit hours earned is 46.6

D. 1. Metropolitan Achievement Test (Reading) (1995)
(Before the Program)

- Schools' grade mean equivalent (GME) ranged from 5.0 to 11.1
- Areas' GME average ranged from 6.5 to 8.0
- District's GME average is 7.6
- National GME average is 9.7

2. **Metropolitan Achievement Test (Mathematics) (1995)**
(Before the Program)

- Schools' grade mean equivalent (GME) ranged from 4.7 to 12.0+
- Areas' GME average ranged from 6.1 to 8.0
- District's GME average is 7.5
- National GME average is 9.7

3. **Metropolitan Achievement Test (Reading) (1996)**
(First Year Program)

- Schools' grade mean equivalent (GME) ranged from 5.7 to 12.0+
- Areas' GME average ranged from 6.4 to 8.0
- District's GME average is 7.7
- National GME average is 9.7

4. **Metropolitan Achievement Test (Mathematics) (1996)**
(First Year Program)

- Schools' grade mean equivalent (GME) ranged from 5.6 to 12.0+
- Areas' GME average ranged from 6.7 to 8.9
- District's GME average is 7.6
- National GME average is 9.7

5. **Metropolitan Achievement Test (Reading) (1997)**
(Second Year Program)

- Schools' grade mean equivalent (GME) ranged from 5.7 to 12.0+
- Areas' GME average ranged from 6.3 to 8.6
- District's GME average is 7.6
- National GME average is 9.7

6. **Metropolitan Achievement Test (Mathematics) (1997)**
(Second Year Program)

- Schools' grade mean equivalent (GME) ranged from 6.3 to 12.0+
- Areas' GME average ranged from 6.6 to 8.7
- District's GME average is 7.6
- National GME average is 9.7

E. 1. **Incoming 9th Grade Students Leaving School* (1995)**
(Before the Program)

- Schools' discontinued average rate ranged from 1.95% to 73.81%
- Areas' discontinued rate ranged from 13.87% to 26.08%
- District's discontinued rate is 18.28%

2. **Incoming 9th Grade Students Leaving School* (1996)**
(First Year Program)

- Schools' discontinued average rate ranged from 0.00% to 63.33%
- Areas' discontinued rate ranged from 8.57% to 18.40%
- District's discontinued rate is 11.70%

3. **Incoming 9th Grade Students Leaving School* (1997)**
(Second Year Program)

- Schools' discontinued average rate ranged from 0.00% to 67.85%
- Areas' discontinued rate ranged from 2.92% to 7.75%
- District's discontinued rate is 5.14%

4. **Ninth Grade Students (Repeating Courses) Leaving School* (1995)**
(Before the Program)

- Schools' discontinued average rate ranged from 0.00% to 100%
- Areas' discontinued rate ranged from 31.18% to 50.56%
- District's discontinued rate is 42.79%

5. **Ninth Grade Students (Repeating Courses) Leaving School* (1996)**
(First Year Program)

- Schools' discontinued average rate ranged from 0.00% to 100%
- Areas' discontinued rate ranged from 10.90% to 47.19%
- District's discontinued rate is 34.72%

6. **Ninth Grade Students (Repeating Courses) Leaving School* (1997)**
(Second Year Program)

- Schools' discontinued average rate ranged from 0.00% to 100%
- Areas' discontinued rate ranged from 7.82% to 19.98%
- District's discontinued rate is 16.44%

The product variables were measured for the ninth grade students for June, 1995 (Without the Program), and the ninth grade students for June, 1996 and June, 1997 (With the Program). The results are based on all schools having ninth grade students:

| | | 6/1996 Compared to 6/95 | 6/1997 Compared to 6/95 |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. Grade Point Averages | - | Remained the same | Remained the same |
| b. Student Daily Attendance | - | Remained the same | Increased |
| c. Credit Hours Attempted | - | Remained the same | Increased |
| d. Credit Hours Earned | - | Remained the same | Increased |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| e. | MAT Reading | - | Increased | Remained the same |
| f. | MAT Mathematics | - | Increased | Increased |
| g. | Educational Status* | - | Decreased** | Decreased** |

Three out of seven variables showed improvement and four remained the same for 1995 vs. 1996. Five out of seven variables showed improvement and two remained the same for 1995 vs. 1997.

## II. TENTH GRADE DATA

A. 1. Grade Point Averages (1996)
(Not Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program)

- Schools' grade point average ranged from 1.0 to 3.0
- Areas' grade point average ranged from 1.7 to 2.1
- District's grade point average is 1.8

2. Grade Point Averages (1997)
(Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program)

- Schools' grade point average (GPA) average ranged from 1.0 to 3.0
- Areas' grade point average ranged from 1.4 to 2.2
- District's grade point average is 1.8

B. 1. Student Daily Attendance (1996)
(Not Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program)

- Schools' daily attendance average ranged from 70% to 95%
- Areas' daily attendance average ranged from 73% to 86%
- District's daily attendance average is 80%

2. Student Daily Attendance (1997)
(Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program)

- Schools' daily attendance average ranged from 71% to 97%
- Areas' daily attendance average ranged from 74% to 85%
- District's daily attendance average is 80%

*Students leaving school (discontinued their education).
**It shows improvement.

C. 1. Credit Hours Attempted and Earned (1996)
(Not Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program)

- Schools' average credit hours attempted ranged from 29.2 to 79.6
- Schools' average credit hours earned ranged from 26.6 to 79.1
- Areas' average of credit hours attempted ranged from 45.9 to 58.4
- Areas' average credit hours earned ranged from 44.2 to 52.9
- District's average of credit hours attempted is 31.8
- District's average credit hours earned is 48.7

2. Credit Hours Attempted and Earned (1997)
(Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program)

- Schools' average credit hours attempted ranged from 26.1 to 78.8
- Schools' average credit hours earned ranged from 26.0 to 78.3
- Areas' average credit hours attempted ranged from 47.7 to 58.5
- Areas' average credit hours earned ranged from 45.9 to 57.0
- District's average credit hours attempted is 53.6
- District's average credit hours earned is 51.4

D. 1. Metropolitan Achievement Test (Reading) (1996)
(Not Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program)

- Schools' grade mean equivalent (GME) ranged from 5.4 to 12.0+
- Areas' GME average ranged from 7.3 to 9.7
- District's GME average is 8.8
- National GME average is 10.7

2. Metropolitan Achievement Test (Reading) (1997)
(Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program)

- Schools' grade mean equivalent (GME) ranged from 6.3 to 12.0+
- Areas' GME average ranged from 7.0 to 9.8
- District's GME average is 8.6
- National GME average is 10.7

3. Metropolitan Achievement Test (Mathematics) (1996)
(Not Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program)

- Schools' grade mean equivalent (GME) ranged from 5.7 to 12.0+
- Areas' GME average ranged from 7.3 to 10.4
- District's GME average is 8.5
- National GME average is 10.7

4. Metropolitan Achievement Test (Mathematics) (1997)
(Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program)

- Schools' grade mean equivalent (GME) ranged from 6.5 to 12.0+
- Areas' GME average ranged from 6.9 to 10.4
- District's GME average is 8.6
- National GME average is 10.7

E. 1. Incoming 10th Grade Students Leaving School* (1996)
(Not Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program)

- Schools' discontinued average rate ranged from 0.00% to 31.04%
- Areas' discontinued rate ranged from 1.96% to 5.36%
- District's discontinued rate is 3.18%

2. Incoming 10th Grade Students Leaving School* (1997)
(Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program)

- Schools' discontinued average rate ranged from 0.00% to 42.42%
- Areas' discontinued rate ranged from 2.45% to 6.80%
- District's discontinued rate is 3.98%

3. Tenth Grade Students (Repeating Courses) Leaving School* (1996)
(Not Exposed to the Ninth Grade Program)

- Schools' discontinued average rate ranged from 0.00% to 100%
- Areas' discontinued rate ranged from 10.7% to 19.48%
- District's discontinued rate is 16.22%

4. Tenth Grade Students (Repeating Courses) Leaving School* (1997)
(Not Exposed to the Ninth Grade program)

- Schools' discontinued average rate ranged from 0.00% to 46.43%
- Areas' discontinued rate ranged from 11.98% to 21.61%
- District's discontinued rate is 15.87%

The product variables were measured for the tenth grade students for June, 1996 (Without the Program), and the tenth grade students for June, 1997 (With the Program). The results are based on all schools having tenth grade students:

| | | 6/1997 Compared to 6/96 |
|---|---|---|
| a. Grade Point Averages | - | Remained the same |
| b. Student Daily Attendance | - | Remained the same |
| c. Credit Hours Attempted | - | Increased |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| d. | Credit Hours Earned | - | Increased |
| e. | MAT Reading | - | Decreased |
| f. | MAT Mathematics | - | Increased |
| g. | Educational Status* | - | Increased** |

Three out of seven variables showed improvement, two remained the same and two declined for 1996 vs. 1997.

## PROCESS EVALUATION FINDINGS

### A. Principals' Perceptions of the Program

Seventeen (17) principals commented on twelve (12) statements dealing with the total program. The responses were analyzed for the percent of positive (agree and strongly agree) answers. The statements were grouped into eight (8) categories for purposes of this narrative report and are presented below. The numbers in parentheses indicate the mean positive responses by the principals for the items in each category. There were nine (9) open-ended questions for which opinions were solicited. Respondents indicated that the program was successful in:

- raising students' achievement in reading, mathematics and science (82%)
- raising 9th Grade students' awareness of high school expectations (100%)
- developing students' ability to work independently (100%)
- encouraging parents to be involved in their child's learning (88%)
- preventing students from dropping out of school (100%)
- helping students develop worthwhile priorities and attend school regularly (94%)
- developing self-discipline, and responsibility for one's own actions and developing students' ability to work cooperatively with others (100%)
- raising 9th Grade students awareness of high school requirements (88%)

One hundred percent (100%) of the principals responded "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to four (4) of the statements.

Eighty-two to ninety-four percent (82% to 94%) of the respondents responded "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to eight (8) of the statements.

*Students leaving school (discontinued their education).
**It shows improvement.

The mean average of all the statements' "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" is ninety-three percent (93%).

Open-Ended Questions

**In the first question, the principals were asked to indicate *how they prepared their staff for the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program.* Their responses follow:**

- provided orientation, in-service and professional development sessions
- prepared teachers through regular school improvement meetings (2)
- shared ninth grade research with the staff related to ninth grade drop outs
- held meetings with the staff in order to design a program to meet the students' needs
- professional development activities (2)
- developing new strategies for the new year
- having in-service regarding the program (3)
- having meetings with the ninth grade staff (3)
- having staff meeting
- assigning teachers to teach ninth grade students
- meeting and planning the instructional program
- staff set goals for the 1996-97 school year
- extensive discussion revolved around parental involvement

**In the next question, the principals were asked to state *the teaching strategies that would be found in the Ninth Grade Restructuring classroom.* They responded as follows:**

- all instruction was student centered and as individualized as possible
- technology was utilized in science to assist students with learning difficult science concepts
- active learning, lecture and discussion, individual and group projects, writing and reading strategies across the curriculum
- individualized instruction
- integration of technology, cooperative participation, scientific inquiry and problem solving, and decision making approaches to learning
- cooperative learning (6)
- authentic instruction (3)
- team teaching (5)
- peer mentoring (3)
- re-enforcement of concepts (3)
- Essential Elements of Effective Instruction (2)
- peer tutoring (3)
- student-centered instruction (3)
- constructivism approach to teaching
- integration of curriculum
- interdisciplinary teaming
- collaborating with each other (2)

- Direct instruction, cross-text questions, spiral approach, writing process, quick-writes, graphic organizers, mastery learning approach, and project method.

- KWL, SQP3R, QAR, manipulatives, story maps, teaching learning framework, buddy system, sustained reading process, HSPT thematic units, peer editing, real life modeling, role playing, brainstorming and one-on-one peer sharing.

**The next question asked *if any organizational change(s) occurred in your school as a result of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program.* They responded as follows:**

- same students were scheduled to have the same teachers and schedules for mathematics, science, English, and social studies
- independent study program, seven classes for all ninth grade students, and team teaching
- group and individual counseling for all ninth grade students
- co-counselors and teachers will continue to collaborate
- School-within-a-school organization for 9th graders.
- Ninth grade changed from "house concept" to "departmental concept".
- Team teaching occurred between math and science, English and computer literacy.
- Block scheduling was implemented in the 9th grade.
- Students with special needs may be programmed out of block scheduling.
- development and implementation of summer enrichment program that prepared students for the transition into high school
- two period academic block (3)
- group and individual counseling
- team teaching for most teachers (4)
- team teaching (3)
- flexible scheduling (2)
- block scheduling (7)
- all academic block program
- peer mentoring
- teaming
- teaming
- school-within-a-school (3)

**In the next question, the principals were asked, *"what if any, were your major concerns about the delivery of instruction by your teachers of Grade 9 students?"* Their responses follow:**

- being sensitive to the needs of the students
- being able to provide a wide variety of instructional approaches which meet the academic needs of the students
- exploring varied instructional techniques to provide variety to the block instructional time
- teaching to the academic level of the 9th grade students
- making learning interesting and challenging
- using techniques and procedures to address students' concerns
- provide new and different modes of instruction

- remind teachers that many students have different learning styles
- teachers must vary their teaching methods to accommodate students' individual differences
- make sure the teaching staff allows the students to be responsible for their learning
- allow students to serve as trainers as well as learners
- teachers may serve as facilitators
- changing teacher styles to meet the needs of all students (3)
- need for a ninth grade administrator
- lack of money for supplemental equipment and supplies
- lack of money for in-service training for staff
- teachers have to be sensitive to the needs of the children
- staff needs continued in-service training
- scheduling and planning for interdisciplinary/integrated learning
- getting the staff to have high expectations of their students
- support of multi-intelligence learning activities
- teachers are hesitant to apply any 'new knowledge' that they have learned
- reading must receive special attention
- using student-centered measures (2)

**In the next question, the principals were asked, *"are you going to do anything different for the 1996-97 Grade 9 students when they are in the 10th grade in 1997-98?"* Their responses follow:**

- continue to help students with tutoring during and after school
- continue to have a tenth grade sponsor
- continue to be included in motivational assemblies and incentive programs
- continue to keep components such as group counseling and field trips
- continue to have block scheduling and team teaching

**The principals were asked to indicate *the reactions of the different stakeholders about the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program.* Following are some of their responses:**

Students:

- most are actively involved and supportive of the program
- students enjoyed the close relationships with their peers, their teachers and counselors
- students have experienced a successful year
- students have been very positive about the program (3)
- favorable reaction to the variety of support
- favorable reaction to the attention they received
- favorable reaction to the benefits they received

- students responded as interested and challenged
- students have improved their achievement in reading, science and mathematics
- attendance improved
- liked cooperative learning, teacher's concern for students gave them a definite support system
- program was an asset and especially beneficial to them during the first year of their high school

Teachers:

- teachers have been very positive and supportive about the program (6)
- most are actively involved and supportive of the program (6)
- teachers are excited about new and innovative teaching ideas. They favor block scheduling and team teaching.
- teachers are supportive and committed
- teachers indicated that more assemblies for students are needed
- teachers are pleased with our efforts and are enthusiastic about chances for success
- new innovative concept requiring direction, structure and improving academic success
- more funding is needed for additional materials
- teachers are involved in the Ninth Grade Restructuring
- all teachers agree that the ninth graders need special attention .

Parents:

- parents are very positive about the program (4)
- parents are actively involved and supportive of the program (2)
- parents enjoy their involvement in their children's education
- parents participated in numerous ways such as: volunteering, organizing parent rallies and make contacts with other parents
- parents that have come into contact are highly supportive (4)
- very pleased and supportive of the program
- more parental involvement is needed
- parents appear to be pleased with the program (2)
- understand the need for support at the beginning of high school

**In the next question, the principals were asked, *"what changes would improve the implementation of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program?"* They responded as follows:**

- providing different academic opportunities
- providing smaller class size via additional personnel and resources
- providing more funding for additional personnel
- providing more individualized attention for students

- providing more workshops/in-service for staff, use of technology and delivery of instruction
- extensive articulation between feeder schools and high school
- the district should continue the services of the ninth grade administrator (2)
- city-wide meetings for ninth grade administrators (3)
- regular area meetings of ninth grade assistant principals and teachers
- common prep-period for teaching staff
- need more time for teachers to have individual planning time
- anticipate that block scheduling and school-wide planning for interdisciplinary/ integrated teaching will be of special benefit
- administrative and/or task force to monitor, support and advice the program (3)
- make summer school program mandatory for selected students
- extending the program for two years (9th and 10th grade)
- providing scheduling so that all ninth grade teachers can have a common period
- identify at-risk students
- support staff
- an extensive reading component
- improve student attendance (4)
- staff in-service for 9th grade teams (2)
- improve self-discipline of students
- male/female mentorship
- additional attendance officers
- identifying of students needs
- improve parental involvement (6)
- additional teacher team planning
- more personnel in specialized areas

**Principals were asked, *"for you, what have been the major challenges of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program?"* Their responses follow:**

- providing meaningful academic strengthening experience for all of our ninth graders
- assisting students to learn self-discipline necessary in their high school transition
- the alignment of staff and students to achieve maximum use of staff and the availability of facility
- convincing others that our needs for resources and time to effectively implement the program are crucial to its success
- providing tutorial services in the area of mathematics
- providing ninth graders with sufficient career counseling
- getting students to realize the necessity of attending classes regularly
- getting more parents to support their children and the school
- trying to meet the tenants of the Ninth Grade Restructuring with a reduced amount of assistant principal service for the entire school year
- improving student self-concept, and self-esteem (2)
- developing a positive, caring "self-worth" attitude
- trying to convince the students that their attendance and achievement in high school must be their primary responsibility and focal point.
- time for teachers to confer with each other regarding instructional strategies
- difficulty in identifying at-risk students and social promotion from middle school
- lack of support at area and central levels

- getting staff to have high expectations regardless of gender and race
- lack of time for teacher preparation and staff development
- lack of total staff commitment
- improving attendance (4)
- lack of sufficient funds (3)
- time for staff in-service training
- lack of a ninth grade administrator
- lack of support personnel (3)
- improving academic achievement (4)
- lack of supplementary materials
- improving parental involvement (3)

**Finally, the principals were asked, *"what, if any, have been the challenges with the parental component of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program?"* They responded as follows:**

- increasing number of involved parents continues to be our goal
- trying to increase parent participation on a consistent basis
- maximizing the number of parents who are active in the planned activates
- adding a school community agent
- trying to involve parents in meaningful ways
- involving more parents in school activities (2)
- getting more parents to be involved in the education of their children
- increase the number of parents who attend parent-teacher conferences
- parents have been very supportive
- parental component must take an active role
- parental involvement is increasing every year
- getting parents actively involved in the process
- next to lack of support staff, parental involvement was my biggest problem
- work schedule and lack of transportation were reasons for non-participation
- parents must be a vital part of the decision making process for the high school years

## B. Teachers' Perceptions of the Program

Two hundred four (204) teachers commented on nineteen (19) statements dealing with the total program. The responses were analyzed for the percent of positive (agree and strongly agree) answers. The statements were grouped into thirteen (13) categories for purposes of this narrative report and are presented below. The numbers in parentheses indicate the mean positive responses by the teachers for individual items. There were seven (7) open-ended questions for which opinions were solicited.

- I received sufficient information regarding the program (87%)
- the program was successful in raising student achievement

  a. reading (83%)
  b. mathematics (84%)
  c. science (78%)

- the program was successful in raising student awareness

  a. high school requirements (96%)
  b. high school expectations (94%)

- the program was successful in developing students'

  a. ability to work cooperatively with others (91%)
  b. self-discipline and responsibility for one's own actions (81%)
  c. the ability to work independently (93%)
  d. worthwhile priorities (83%)

- the program was successful in encouraging parents to be involved in their child's learning (88%)

- parents received sufficient advance notification about the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program (84%)

- teachers received sufficient information for the implementation of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program (84%)

- ninth grade students attended school regularly (84%)

- the program was successful in preventing students from dropping out of school (88%)

- I feel the program will result in improved achievement (96%)

- teachers feel the program will result in improved achievement (91%)

- I am supportive of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program (97%)

- teachers seem to be supportive of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program (85%)

Ninety-one to ninety-seven percent (91% to 97%) of the staff "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" to eight (8) of the statements.

Eighty-one to eighty-eight percent (81% to 88%) of the teachers "Strongly Agreed" or "Agreed" to the other eleven (11) statements.

The mean average of all the statements "Strongly Agreed" or "Agreed" is eighty-six percent (86%).

Open-Ended Questions

**In the first question, the teachers were asked to indicate *the strategies that would be found in the Ninth Grade classrooms in their school.* They responded as follows:**

- student-centered instruction and cooperative learning (17)
- cooperative learning (71)
- assertive discipline, Daily journal, group work and lecture discussion
- oral reports and peer mentoring
- collaborative learning
- use of manipulatives and hands-on-activities (12)
- highly structured activities
- authentic method
- semantic mapping
- vocabulary development (4)
- direct instruction (5)
- peer-teaching and projects
- organizational skills
- collaborative learning
- SQR3
- group presentation (6)
- team projects (3)
- hands-on activities (13)
- peer counseling (3)
- authentic method of instruction (10)
- contructivism
- alternative assessment (5)
- class discussion
- higher order thinking
- team approach
- lecture
- discovery method
- peer editing of writing
- scientific investigation
- cooperative learning (19)
- discovery learning
- independence practice
- peer tutoring (3)

**In the next question, the teachers were asked to indicate *any organizational change(s) that occurred in their school as a result of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program.* They responded as follows:**

- flexible scheduling and team teaching (15)
- ninth grade administrator and counselor
- block classes with the same teachers (7)
- students were organized into clusters with common academic teachers
- "House Concept" which allows "core teachers" to have common prep period
- block scheduling and team teaching (2)
- block scheduling (35)
- writing across the curriculum (7)
- two-hour block scheduling
- team teaching (26)
- school-within-a-school (5)

**Teachers were asked, *what, if any, are your major concerns about the delivery of instruction to the ninth graders.* They responded as follows:**

- delivery of instruction for ninth grade students (5)
- more student-centered instruction is needed
- many students fail to receive full instruction due to their attendance
- scheduling does not allow for individuality
- students are not allowed to select their own classes
- materials and equipment to help deliver instruction
- to much classroom disturbance due to discipline problems
- need for improved facilities and more equipment
- keeping students on-task and interested in the lessons
- keeping students interested in school
- keeping students motivated and getting them to do their work
- lack of basic mathematics and communication skills of students coming from middle school
- ninth grade students are very difficult to teach, they have very poor self-control and very weak basic skills (3)
- need for more counseling and tutoring
- very difficult introducing new concepts
- being creative, innovative and interesting
- helping teachers to understand the diversity of students
- attendance and low expectations of students
- reading problems with most students
- far too little emphasis is placed on mastery skills
- far too much time is required to deal with classroom management
- lack of motivation to excel or even succeed
- lack of student attention (3)
- lack of consistent attendance (5)
- external factors
- large class size (2)
- students are deficient in basic skills
- keeping students focused
- handling discipline students
- lack of self-discipline
- too many interferences
- lack of hands-on materials
- limited funds
- keeping students focused
- textbook is too difficult

**The teachers were asked to indicate *the reactions of the stakeholders about the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program.* They responded as follows:**

<u>Students</u>:

- students are positive and excited about the program (12)
- students feel that teachers care about them
- some students blossomed in the program

- students feel good about themselves
- students felt secure in the program
- many strive for excellence despite obvious barriers
- positive support from counselor and social worker
- students support the Ninth Grade Restructuring
- students' attitude about school and learning have been positive (5)
- students are more cooperative (8)
- good and positive
- students like the program
- students feel more like a family
- enjoyed the assemblies
- increase their expectations
- students are enthusiastic (7)

Teachers:

- teachers feel they should be better organized, receptive, concerned and involved
- teachers felt that the program was positive (5)
- teachers were involved in the program (15)
- teaching staff seem to enjoy and support the program
- teachers enjoy the innovativeness of the program
- teachers motivate the students to succeed
- teachers support the Ninth Grade Restructuring (29)
- teachers show enthusiasm for the program (7)
- teachers motivate students to learn and accept responsibility
- very positive
- positive and supportive (25)
- teachers are motivated (4)
- teachers are enthusiastic (10)
- teachers are cooperative (19)
- teachers are supportive (23)
- assemblies
- encouraged and appreciative (6)
- concerned about the students
- open and eager to change
- teachers feel more empowered
- teachers are supportive of the motives

Parents:

- parents are pleased this program is helping their children
- parents have positive outlook about the program (7)
- parents are very supportive and appreciative (19)
- parents prefer middle school for their ninth grade children
- parents find the ninth grade program appealing (5)
- parents seemed satisfied with the program
- appreciate the advantages of the program
- parents enjoy the special attention given the students
- parents seem aware of Ninth Grade Restructuring (13)
- parents are informed about their child's academic success
- positive and supportive (27)
- parents are more involved (10)
- need more parental involvement

Administrators:

- administrators are knowledgeable and pleased about the program (3)
- administrators have been providing the needed support in implementing the program
- administrators were positive about the program (15)
- administrators are very supportive (8)
- administrators are positive and pleased (7)
- administrators are committed, concerned and involved
- administrators are quite supportive (2)
- administrators are confident about the program
- administrators have been both cooperative and supportive

**Teachers were asked to indicate *the changes that would improve the implementation of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program*. They responded as follows:**

- developing student self-discipline
- students, parents and staff can be made more aware of the program
- creating of an "in-school" suspension
- organizing a more elaborate orientation program for everyone
- allowing ninth grade teachers to meet once a month to discuss ninth grade curriculum and all concerns regarding program
- having more workshops to help improve lesson plans (7)
- having parent involvement, student/parent workshops, and administrator/teacher workshops
- providing flexible scheduling with more classes to offer the students
- providing strong mentor program for ninth graders
- increasing the role of technology in the teaching and learning process
- better organization from the start of the year
- ninth grade classes should be on the same floor/same wing of the building
- program should continue because of the need
- more workshops are needed how to teach ninth graders (17)
- workshops (teachers and parents) with motivational speakers
- regular assemblies for ninth grade students and computers in every classroom
- develop self-esteem workshops for all ninth grade students
- need to reach more parents to have an active role in the school
- scheduling and time for counseling
- discipline must be strong and consistent
- remedial mathematics and reading program
- more incentives to keep students interested
- improve closer contacts with parents
- need to get more kids to classes
- lower class size would be helpful (6)
- more monitoring about attendance
- more parental involvement (7)
- block scheduling (7)
- teachers need more information (3)

- common preparation period (4)
- team teaching (14)

**In the next question, the teachers were asked to indicate *what have been the major challenges of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program.* Their responses follow:**

- raising student awareness of high expectations
- working a little harder to keep and retain the attention of my students
- changing some students' attitudes about the program
- helping students to work effectively in small groups
- trying to impress upon students the need for regular attendance
- increasing student skills in reading and writing
- getting students to be more responsible
- providing and creating meaningful lessons
- large class size, student behavior, reading abilities, parental involvement
- assisting students in their transition from middle school to high school
- providing interesting and challenging lessons for the students
- getting acclimated to all ninth graders their needs and behavior problems
- teaching students reading and writing skills (7)
- keeping students motivated in attending school regularly involving more parents into the program
- meeting the challenge of effectively instructing, guiding, mentoring, understanding and dealing with a typical ninth grader
- dealing with the emotional and social growth
- including staff in planning the program (8)
- trying to motivate students to attend classes
- motivating students to accept responsibility for learning behavior
- improving attendance (3)
- understanding student needs
- positive parental involvement (8)
- meeting more often as 9th grade staff
- keeping the students in school (10)

**In the final question, the teachers were asked to indicate *what, if any, have been the challenges with the parental component of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program.* They responded as follows:**

- parental support is always a major concern
- parents need to be more involved in their children's education
- parental information could be greater and more helpful
- make parents aware of the ninth grade restructuring
- more parental involvement is needed (11)
- getting parents to participate in workshops
- parents did not attend school functions (6)
- parents should be contacted on a daily basis about student absences
- finding parents fully interested in the future of their children

- keeping parents involved in the learning of their children
- involving more parents in the parent/teacher conference
- parents have been cooperative and supportive
- informing parents of the rules and regulations of the program
- parents have been supportive and polite
- accommodating work schedules of parents
- communicating with parents (5)
- poor parental turnout for conferences (2)
- lack of parental involvement (23)

## C. Students' Perceptions of the Program

Nine hundred fourteen (914) students commented on twenty (20) statements dealing with the total program. The responses were analyzed for the percent of positive (agree and strongly agree) answers. The statements were grouped into eleven (11) categories for purposes of this narrative report and are presented below. The numbers in parentheses indicate the mean positive responses by the students for individual items. There were two (2) open-ended questions for which opinions were solicited.

- satisfied with the services received from the program (84%)
- teachers appeared to be sincerely concerned about me (80%)
- was given homework daily in most of my classes (72%)
- received help from my teachers when I needed it (83%)
- services offered by the counselor were very helpful (83%)
- administrator appeared to be sincerely concerned about me (83%)

- the program was successful in improving students'

  a. work habits (85%)
  b. attitudes toward learning (83%)
  c. reading skills (81%)
  d. mathematics skills (81%)
  e. science skills (79%)
  f. ability to work cooperatively with others (85%)

- completed assigned tasks (82%)
- raised awareness of high school requirements (87%)
- developed better self-discipline (77 %)

- the program helped us to

  a. get along with other students (83%)
  b. get along better with adults (76%)
  c. feel better about ourselves (87%)

d. feel better about school (83%)
e. attend school regularly (70%)

Eighty to eighty-seven percent (80% to 87%) of the students "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" to fourteen (14) of the statements.

Seventy to seventy-nine percent (70% to 79%) of the students "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" to the other six (6) statements.

The mean average of the "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" responses is eighty-one percent (81%).

**In the first question, the students were asked to indicate *what they liked best about the program*. They responded as follows:**

- the program gave us another chance (7)
- teachers and administrators cared about our success (5)
- the program helped me with my study skills, test taking skills and my confidence (3)
- made me aware of my responsibilities as a student
- the program was completely flawless in my eyes
- it helped me maintain a steady study time at home
- the teachers were always there to help you (13)
- liked the environment and the people in the program (9)
- there were smaller classes and it was easier for students and teachers (4)
- having the same people in your class
- the way the administrators helped us (6)
- helped me get along with people better (8)
- made students feel more comfortable and welcomed (7)
- program gave me a boost to a higher level (5)
- without this program I would have been lost (6)
- helping students work cooperatively with each other (7)
- teachers were there when needed (13)
- teachers and administrators were very concerned about the people in the program (11)
- helping me to get along with my classmates (3)
- teachers are very helpful (14)
- increasing my learning skills (10)
- services offered by the counselor (8)
- getting help from our teachers (68)

**In the second question, the students were asked to indicate *what they liked least about the program*. They responded as follows:**

- I didn't like the choices we had for our classes
- some of the teachers were not really concerned
- the way some teachers treated students
- some students did not take this program seriously
- the way they treated the honor class not allowing them to go on field trips
- poor attitude of some ninth grade students
- poor attitude of some teachers toward the students
- separated from the rest of the students (10)
- attitude of some teachers and students (5)
- counselors weren't very cooperative (2)
- long length of the school day
- classes were too long
- student fighting (4)
- some of my teachers (7)
- there were not enough activities
- getting up early in the morning
- science wasn't explained clearly
- too much homework (14)
- some teachers' attitudes (7)
- some of my teachers (6)
- some of the classes were very hard

## D. Ninth Grade Administrators' Perceptions of the Program

Twenty-three (23) ninth grade administrators commented on twelve (12) different statements dealing with the total program. The statements were grouped into nine (9) categories for purposes of this narrative report and are presented below. The numbers in parentheses indicate the mean positive responses by the ninth grade administrators for each item in the category. There were nine (9) open-ended questions for which opinions were solicited. Respondents indicated that the program was successful in:

- raising students' achievement in reading (83%)
- raising students' achievement in science (87%)
- raising students' achievement in mathematics (96%)
- raising 9th Grade students' awareness of high school expectations (100%)
- raising 9th Grade students' awareness of high school requirements (100%)
- developing students' ability to work independently (96%)
- encouraging parents to be involved in their child's learning (78%)
- helping students to develop worthwhile priorities (91%)
- helping students to attend school regularly (87%)
- developing self-discipline and responsibility for one's own actions (91%)

developing students' ability to work cooperatively with others (96%)

- preventing students from dropping out of school (100%)

One hundred percent (100%) of the Ninth Grade Administrators responded "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to three (3) of the statements.

Seventy-eight to ninety-six percent (78% to 96%) of the Ninth Grade Administrators responded "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to nine (9) of the statements.

The mean average of all the positive statements is ninety-two percent (92%).

Open-Ended Questions

**In the first question, the Ninth Grade administrators were asked to indicate *how they prepared their staff for the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program*. Their responses follow:**

- preparation workshops for the staff (7)
- professional development opportunities (4)
- on-going staff development sessions were utilized to provide information and awareness of the staff
- orientation meeting was held where materials about the program were disseminated and discussed in detail
- brainstorming sessions were held with all involved teachers periodically to discuss the details and progress of our program
- all teachers met with other members of their specialty areas
- met periodically with ninth grade staff (5)
- staff was aware of the program (19)
- planning sessions and conferences (3)
- orientation for support staff and parents
- communicating to staff in staff meetings
- department head and teachers' meeting discussions
- reviewed goals, objectives, accomplishments and student achievements
- identified areas of improvement
- staff were involved in the Ninth Grade Restructuring
- weekly staff meetings (3)
- teachers in-service training (8)
- organizing ninth grade teams (4)
- weekly meetings with the teams (4)

**In the next question, the Ninth Grade administrators were asked to indicate *the teaching strategies that would be found in the Ninth Grade classrooms in their schools.* They responded as follows:**

- role play, discussion, brainstorming, and creative inquiry
- modeling, peer tutoring and direct teaching

- use of supportive technology
- team teaching (6)
- work related applications
- role playing
- learning styles (5)
- narrative writing improvements
- instituting homework policy
- direct instruction (3)
- writing process (3)
- sustained reading process
- mastery learning process
- variety of teaching methods (4)
- interdisciplinary teaching/ projects
- specialized support for students
- cooperative learning activities (7)
- hands-on-learning activities (3)
- student-centered instruction
- peer collaboration
- teaching-learning framework
- thematic teaching units
- guest speakers lecture series
- cross-text questions
- one-on-one peer sharing
- project method
- project driven instruction
- student-centered instruction (9)
- technology implementation of the curriculum
- brain-based environmental concepts

**The Ninth Grade administrators were asked to state *if any organizational change(s) occurred in their school as a result of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program.* They responded as follows:**

- aligning curriculum with student needs
- ninth graders were assigned seven classes
- centralized location of ninth grade students
- Saturday Tutorial/Enrichment Program
- organized into smaller units/houses called academic clusters
- block scheduling/placed into homeroom group traveled as a unit for six classes
- common periods for all English, mathematics, science and social studies/allowing for team planning and teaching
- block scheduling and team teaching
- team teaching (12)
- technology across the curriculum
- block scheduling (10)
- flexible scheduling (9)
- school-within-a-school (4)
- teaming (3)
- curriculum modification

**The Ninth Grade administrators were asked *if they were going to do anything different for the 1996-97 Grade 9 students when they are in the 10th grade in 1997-98.* Their responses follow:**

- include them in the ninth grade motivational assemblies and incentive programs
- allow most successful students to mentor new students
- administrators and teachers will plan block scheduling and tem teaching
- peer mediation
- increase in self-esteem assemblies
- more experiential notification of areas

- increase software learning technology
- implement academic and support program
- continue helping these students over the four years
- they will be given access to tutoring from their present teachers
- they will be invited to assemblies and programs whenever possible
- field trips will be managed for them
- students will be motivated in the 10th grade
- ninth grade teachers will share information with tenth grade teachers
- use more structured programs in the 10th grade
- have monthly meetings with them throughout the year
- celebrate their attendance and academic achievement
- have formal assemblies for all 10th graders
- monitor student attendance and GPA's from grade level reports
- academic clusters were designed to guide ninth graders over the four years
- use the support staff
- offer tutoring
- looping and teaming process
- offer more counseling

- The 1996-97 Action Plan was two-fold

  a. to indicate and implement programs at the ninth grade level that positively impact achievement, attendance, social development and school retention

  b. to continue to provide resources and services to the group over the four years of high school

- during the ninth grade year, the students are sub-divided into one of the three groups for intervention, support and service. The dimensions are based on need and they are:

  a. Group 1 - students who demonstrate satisfactory achievement but require ongoing monitoring and support to maintain or improve achievement levels

  b. Group 2 - students who exhibit a pattern of poor attendance, low achievement, and disciplinary problems and are at-risk for failure of dropping out

  c. Group 3 - students at-risk who might dropout. They exhibit excessive absences, receive F's in all classes and have three or more A/B Code Violations

**The Ninth Grade administrators were asked to state *if they had any concerns about the delivery of instruction of their Ninth Grade teachers.* They responded as follows:**

- students need to be provided with more opportunities to be actively involved
- students need to be actively involved in learning experiences

- students need more effective, alternative discipline strategies need to be employed
- students need to be motivated to attend classes, accept responsibility for their own behavior and to achieve academic success
- teachers' lack of patience and tolerance
- transforming teaching practices in the classroom
- changing the "mind set" of teachers to accept and use new instructional practices in the classroom
- classroom visits reveal that teachers still rely heavily on traditional teacher-centered practices
- teachers should be concerned about the "total child"
- instruction should be presented on a creative, informative concept and caring manner
- provide students with opportunities to be more actively involved
- bring the departments into teaming process
- interdisciplinary learning for all students
- time to plan and collaborate with other 9th grade teachers
- staff development and training for all of our teachers
- inconsistency in the delivery of instruction to students

**The Ninth Grade administrators were asked to state *the reactions of the following stakeholders about the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program*. Their responses follow:**

Students:

- students are appreciative of the extra attention and concern
- students are pleased with the counseling and mediation
- students have demonstrated a positive response to the services provided by the program
- individual attention to the chronic at-risk group has improved their attendance
- students have reacted in a positive fashion to the efforts of our staff
- students developed self-worth and consider the program to be a challenging one
- students appear to be ambivalent about the program
- seek us out when they need encouragement, assistance or when they are in trouble
- basically the students are receptive about the program
- some students welcomed the extra attention
- raising achievement in reading, science and mathematics
- Ninth Grade Restructuring was an asset to them
- program assisted them
- ninth grade retention is higher

Teachers:

- teachers are generally positive and responsive (2)
- teachers are quite supportive of the program (3)
- teachers are favorable to the program and most cooperative
- teachers are excited and accepting change (2)
- higher morale of total school environment
- most teachers view the program as having a positive affect in affective areas
- teachers have been enthusiastic and have applied themselves to the task
- new teachers need in-service to cope with the 9th graders
- teachers in the program are receptive
- involved in the implementation process
- teachers met monthly to discuss curriculum issues

Parents:

- parents want to be actively involved
- parents want us to continue to "save" their children
- parents of most at-risk students are consistent in their attendance at disciplinary conference
- parents involved responded positive
- parents reacted favorably to the academic and supportive programs
- some parents have responded positively to the ninth grade activities
- have increased their attendance at PTSA meetings
- some have volunteered to assist in the halls and the lunchroom
- parents seemed pleased with our program (7)
- parents feel there is a need for the program
- more parents are needed to be involved in the program
- parents are aware of the program (12)
- parents were appreciative about the referrals and direct assistance given to them in dealing with their child
- parents appreciated the firmness and dedication. The staff members exhibit in dealing with the students.

**The Ninth Grade administrators were asked to state *the changes that would improve the implementation of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program*. They responded as follows:**

- additional teachers, smaller classes and additional technology
- additional staff in-services and more team teaching
- more interdisciplinary ninth grade teacher meetings
- consistent staff and more teachers teaching only ninth grade students
- mandatory parent/student orientation prior to registration
- provide resources to implemented alternative discipline
- improvement of student attendance

- continue the development of community resource/partnership support programs
- one city-wide ninth grade administrator meeting
- professional development opportunities
- flexibility to schedule smaller class size for ninth grade classes
- develop a "reading resource lab" to be coordinated by a reading specialist to assist at-risk students and the teachers of at-risk students
- increase time for planning and developing integrated learning materials that facilitate active student-centered learning in the classroom
- personnel must always be interviewed and screened before placed in the program
- full-time social worker should be hired and help the at-risk students with their problems
- special funds need to be made accessible to purchase items in a timely fashion
- attendance agent is more desirable for the program
- need for support staff (social worker, psychologist, and attendance officer)
- orientation the first week with staff, students and all the parents
- workshops on how to increase parental involvement
- central office support and involvement
- more time for meeting and planning with 9th grade teachers
- extend the restructuring program for two years
- creation of remedial labs for math and reading
- continuation of the 8th grade assessment of all students
- improve student attendance **(10)**
- staff development component **(10)**
- improve academic performance **(10)**
- full-time attendance officer
- improve parental involvement **(16)**

**The Ninth Grade administrators were asked to indicate *what has been the major challenge for them of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program.* They responded as follows:**

- having frequent, face-to-face conferences with students, parents and staff have been most beneficial
- developing an innovative and creative curriculum
- receiving feedback from instructional staff regarding pros and cons of the program
- selecting staff who are the most effective with motivating and nurturing ninth graders
- having staff able to administer discipline in a constructive manner
- students' poor attendance pattern
- lack of parental participation
- expansion of 'school-within-a-school' concept
- managing time to be an instructional leader within the context of assigned responsibilities
- improving attendance and achievement **(12)**
- reducing the number of Code of Conduct Violations

- keeping staff on-track with our paradigm shifts away from traditional approaches
- involving parents in the educational process
- getting students to attend and keep them motivated from day-to-day
- administering the program without the support staff
- conflict between home and school regarding the importance of attending school
- improving student attendance/truancy
- encourage students to maximize their academic potential (7)
- student absenteeism (7)
- lack of parental support (8)

**Finally, the Ninth Grade administrators were asked, *"what, if any, have been the challenges with the parental component of the Ninth Grade Restructuring Program"?* Their responses follow:**

- having very difficult time to get parents actively involved on a continuous basis
- majority of parents do not participate with school programs (5)
- parental involvement of students experiencing academic, attendance and personal problems
- parental involvement in the education of their children
- ninth grade parents were invited to a ninth grade orientation
- two additional meetings were held for parents to discuss ninth grade program
- getting parents to school to help their children
- collaborating with parents
- increase parental involvement in our program
- increase parental involvement in extra-curricular activities
- increase parental involvement in community projects

## Recommendations

Schools can help retain at-risk ninth graders through a variety of policies and practices. The following recommendations should be considered to help all ninth graders begin successful high school careers:

- Continue to decrease alienation in the high school by breaking the school down into small, stable units to increase personal attention from the staff. Examples of this strategy include:

  - create a school within-a-school environment

  - expanding the role of a homeroom teacher to include mentoring and personal guidance;

- extending class to two periods (block scheduling) to limit the need for students to move from class to class;

- creating clusters of students who remain together for several classes and thus can offer each other support;

- creating alternative schools and mini-schools that offer disaffected students compensatory programs and more personalized attention.

- Continue to sensitize teachers to the problems of ninth graders so that the teachers can be helpful; assign more experienced teachers to this grade.

- Continue to offer special programs to orient middle school students to ninth grade, thus helping to smooth the passage. Such programs include:

  - schedule visits to the high schools by small groups of incoming students.

  - assign a high school student to mentor each new student.

  - have a middle school student shadow a high school student to learn what a high school day is like.

  - schedule orientation activities, preferably for small groups of ninth graders, that range from a single session on the first day in school to an ongoing program lasting up to a full semester. During these orientations, rules and expectations are discussed, courses of study are described, and human awareness issues like multicultural relations and drug use are explored.

  - have orientation activities for parents that cover much of the same ground as do the sessions provide for the new ninth graders.

All of the suggestions for easing the transition to ninth grade presented above have been successfully tested in school districts around the country. The experience of these school districts suggests that schools can make a real difference for students by giving special attention to the ninth grade as a pivotal year in a student's education. The experiences in Detroit, as documented in this report, add additional evidence that these approaches can yield success for Grade 9 students.

The following recommendations were made based on interviews with administrators and teachers, and the surveys which solicited information regarding the program from principals, ninth grade administrators, teachers and students.

- All the ninth grade administrators indicated a need for a district wide forum – such as a day long conference – where they could get together to discuss, disseminate

and critique and/or study options for improving the success of the ninth grade restructuring initiative.

- In order for a school to be successful in carrying out their goals for restructuring, all personnel should be in place on time.

- Almost all of the administrators interviewed indicated they would like to have a school within-a-school concept. Although some of them indicated they have space problems, they should try to solve them so that all ninth grade students can be scheduled on one floor or a certain part of the building.

- Increase time for planning and developing integrated learning materials that initiate active student centered learning in the classroom.

- A full-time social worker, attendance agent and a counselor would be able to deal with the problems of at-risk students.

- Development of a 'reading resource lab' coordinated by a reading specialist to assist at-risk students and the teachers of at-risk students in improving reading deficiencies.

- Research has shown that constructivist strategies (student-centered and active participation) improved student learning and retention. In-service should be provided to assist teachers in planning constructive activities because classroom visits reveal that teachers still rely heavily on traditional teacher-centered practices such as lecturing and paper-pencil participation activities.

- Seek ways to involve more parents in the school programs and activities.

- It is imperative that schools find better ways to increase parental and family involvement in children's education.

- Continue to have block scheduling, team teaching, and continue to provide group and individual counseling with the 10th grade students. Counselors and teachers should collaborate to assure that the services to these students will not be drastically changed.

- Provide students with more opportunities to be actively involved in learning experiences. More effective, alternative discipline strategies need to be employed. Students need to be motivated to attend classes, accept responsibility for their own behavior, and to achieve academic success.

- Efforts should be made to continue the Ninth Grade Restructuring efforts into the 10th grade.